
Bipartisan Support for Congressional Resolution to Renew Commitment to National Day to Prevent Teen Pregnancy

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Washington, D.C. - Today, a group of bipartisan legislators, including Reps. Chris Murphy (D-CT), Mike Castle (R-DE), Diana DeGette (D-CO), Louise Slaughter (D-NY), and Judy Biggert (R-IL) joined together to introduce a Congressional resolution to renew the national effort to reduce teen pregnancy by supporting the goals of National Day to Prevent Teen Pregnancy. The National Day, which will be observed today, centers on helping teens focus on the importance of postponing pregnancy and parenthood until they are adults.

Unfortunately, after more than a decade of significant decline, teen pregnancy and birth rates are now on the rise. According to data released in March 2009 by the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), the U.S. teen birth rate increased two years in a row, increasing 5% between 2005 and 2007. This stands in stark contrast to a 34% decrease between 1991 and 2005.

"As a new parent, I know the day-to-day joys and challenges of raising a child. But teenagers are in many ways still kids themselves, and so we must do everything we can to educate them about preventing unwanted teen pregnancies so that they can finish growing up, complete their education, and become better prepared for parenthood. I hope that our effort to raise awareness of the National Day to Prevent Teen Pregnancy will help reverse the recent rise in teen pregnancy rates and encourage teenagers to make healthy choices for themselves and their future," said U.S. Rep. Chris Murphy (D-CT).

"Teen pregnancy is closely linked to a number of social issues such as poverty, overall child well-being, health issues, education, and other risky behavior. We must double efforts to help reverse the recent rise in teen pregnancy in order to ensure the success of our young people," said U.S. Rep. Castle (R-DE), co-chair of the House Advisory Panel to the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy.

"After more than a decade of decline, teen pregnancy and birth rates have now increased. American teens need our

support, in the form of effective public policies, to help them postpone pregnancy and parenting," said U.S. Rep. Diana DeGette (D-CO), Vice Chair of the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

"After more than a decade of decline, teen pregnancy and birth rates are now on the rise," said Pro-Choice Caucus Co-Chair Louise M. Slaughter (D-NY). "We can all agree that we must reduce unintended teen pregnancies and the methodology is clear - empower women to prevent unintended pregnancies through education and access to contraception."

"Teen pregnancy places an immense burden on families, and it too often leads to young women foregoing the education they need to be happier and more successful mothers down the road," said U.S. Rep. Judy Biggert (R-IL). "Teaching our children about safe behavior is critical to ensuring that they have the bright futures they deserve. I am pleased to join my colleagues in speaking out for the health and safety of our children and grandchildren."

Today, more than 175 national organizations in the health, entertainment, education, faith and media fields, and nearly 50 state and local organizations are partnering to promote and support the 8th annual National Day to Prevent Teen Pregnancy. More than 300,000 individuals are expected to take this year's National Day Quiz, which is designed to help teens think carefully about sex and waiting, the possibility of pregnancy, and the lifelong challenges of being a parent.

By logging onto <http://www.stayteen.org/>, teens can take the online quiz that presents them with realistic scenarios and asks them to take a course of action. The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, sponsor of the National Day, says the Internet based quiz will empower teens across the nation to make a personal commitment to avoiding unplanned pregnancy. More than a quarter million people took the quiz last year and nearly three-quarters of them said it helped them think about what they might do in such situations. For more information or to learn how you can get involved, please visit <http://www.thenationalcampaign.org/>.

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